

Pierangelo Buongiorno, Annarosa Gallo, Salvatore Marino
(eds.), Edoardo Volterra, *Senatus Consulta (Acta Senatus,*
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einer Palingenesie, Münster, 23.–24. April 2015 (Acta Senatus,
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For historians of Rome and Roman law, legal documents constitute an untold source of information concerning various aspects of the functioning of the Roman legal system as well as political institutions and social and economic realities. As they come from various periods of the history of Rome, they allow us to track the changes which the Roman state and society underwent over time. However, a significant difficulty placing major limitations on the use of such sources is the lack of a complete set of their various categories. From the nineteenth century onwards, researchers sought to publish collections of legal documents encompassing a selected period in the history of Rome, the legislation of the various emperors, or particular categories of these documents. Owing to their nature, a large number of these publications are still useful, although both the current state of information on these documents and the numerous new discoveries of them make it necessary to replace these corpora. In recent years, there have been many such projects, some of which have even been completed. Their results have been made available either in the form of publications or as electronic databases. New initiatives have also appeared in recent years. One of these is the PaRoS project – *Palingenesie der römischen Senatsbeschlüsse (509 v.Chr. – 284 n.Chr.)*, run by a team of researchers headed by Pierangelo Buongiorno at the University of Münster. The project ties in with a similar initiative led by Edoardo Volterra, an eminent historian of Roman law, who, despite devoting several decades of his life to his project, was unable to complete it. While working on it, however, he amassed a huge number of materials, which were handed to the archive at Palazzo Farnese in Rome after his death. The discovery of this deposit more than a decade ago played a role in the establishment of at least two projects aiming to revise and complete Volterra's work. PaRoS is the more recent of the two.

The results of the research conducted within the PaRoS project are to be publicised as part of the *Acta Senatus* collection published by Franz Steiner Verlag. This collection is to comprise two series. Series A will include the texts of documents together with a commentary and bibliography, while Series B will be devoted to studies and materials connected to the project. The first two volumes of Series B have just seen the light of day. The first contains an anastatic reprint of Volterra's two most important works, with the same title: *Senatus consulta*. The first text was published in 1940, and the second in 1969. Their reedition is furnished with an extensive essay by Pierangelo Buongiorno, *Una vicenda intellettuale* (pp. 11–41), which reconstructs the course of Volterra's studies on *senatus consulta* from 1935, when he first developed a close interest in them, until his death in 1984. This portrait is based on archival documents and the recollections of the scholar's colleagues. It reveals little-known facts about the realisation of the project, the evolution of its conception, and the obstacles that prevented Volterra from completing it. The second important text in this volume is Annarosa Gallo's article '*Senatus consulta*': *due voci a confronto* (pp. 42–72). The author points to the similarities, but especially the differences that characterised the two works. Specifying these is important not only because several decades passed between the publication of each of them, but also because they differ somewhat in terms of character as well as the changes Volterra introduced to the content. It certainly becomes much easier to find relevant passages from these works, whether referring to specific paragraphs or to individual *senatus consulta*, as a result of the concordances prepared by Salvatore Marino (*Tavole di raffronto*, pp. 73–76).

The second of the two aforementioned volumes is somewhat different. It contains the proceedings of the international conference held in April 2015 in Münster, addressing the projects and research methodologies concerning reconstruction of the Roman legal system. This conference was an opportunity to present both the PaRoS project and those that have taken place or are ongoing at various academic institutions. The current state of research on *senatus consulta*, as well as the methodology and objective of the PaRoS project, are presented by Buongiorno (*Per una palingenesi dei senatus consulta (509 a.C. – 284 d.C.): prospettive di ricerca*, pp. 13–31). The main aim of this project is to collect *testimonia* concerning decrees of the Roman senate in the period in question by analysing all types of historical sources. The assembled documents will be grouped chronologically into four periods: 1) 509–133 BCE; 2) 133–31 BCE; 3) 31 BCE–96 CE; 4) 96–284 CE. The text of each *senatus consultum* will be presented in accordance with a uniform template: text, legal and historical commentary, and bibliography. The significant methodological problems regarding publication of documents from the first of these periods are highlighted by Thibaud Lanfranchi (*Réflexions méthodologiques pour une palingénésie des status-consules au début de la République*, pp. 33–52). Lanfranchi argues that the biggest problem with studies of documents from this period is the secondary nature of sources, in which references to the earliest legislation of the senate and popular assemblies as well as the lateness of their establishment remained, thus rendering it impossible to reconstruct the contents of the original documents. He also expresses the opinion that, regarding the period of the late Republic, the PaRoS project for the first time permits in-depth studies on the more than 340 *senatus consulta* and the legislation of Sulla, which had previously not been examined satisfactorily (pp. 49–50). Aliénor Vardy (*Palingénésie des status-consules des II^{ème} et III^{èmes} siècles (de Nerva*

à Valérien), pp. 53–72) presents the objectives and methodological problems concerning producing a corpus of the *senatus consulta* encompassing the period from Nerva to Valerian, from which there are 66 dated decrees of the senate and 63 undated ones. Analysis of these decrees leads to important conclusions. These include the assertion that during Hadrian's rule there appeared the practice of passing the resolutions of the senate inspired by the ruling emperor. During Marcus Aurelius' and Commodus' reigns, the *senatus consulta* coexisted with *orationes principum*, whereas from the time of the Severan dynasty, imperial *orationes* were replaced by *senatus consulta*, and imperial edicts became the main source of law. Jean-Louis Ferrary's article, meanwhile (*La base de données LEPOR*, pp. 73–84), presents the LEPOR project (*LEges POpuli Romani*), which aims to create and develop a database "consistant en notices consacrées chacune à une loi comitiale du peuple romain", available online for all researchers (p. 73). This project is intended to result in a new corpus of various types of official Roman documents (*senatus consulta*, edicts, letters) in Greek and Latin deriving from the Greek-speaking provinces of the empire in the period of the late Republic and rule of Augustus. This is to form an updated version of R. K. Sherk's well-known work *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (Cambridge 1984), in which 78 such documents were published. The new corpus is to contain 114 documents and dossiers. Similar in nature is Francesca Lamberti's presentation of a project of a corpus of epigraphical documents concerning *municipia* and colonies in the period of the Republic and under Augustus' rule (*Riflessioni sulla riedizione di leges municipii e coloniae*, pp. 93–112). The course and progress of Edoardo Volterra's work in the 1950s, based on his own recollections and archival documents, is in turn outlined by Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi (*Edoardo Volterra e la Palingenesi delle Costituzioni imperiali*, pp. 113–138). The idea of completing Volterra's studies on the *senatus consulta*, from which the PaRoS project grew, had a forerunner in the guise of the "Projet Volterra", which, in collaboration with the École française de Rome, took place in the United Kingdom from 1995 to 2004 and then 2005 to 2015. The history of the project, its results and the problems it ran into along the way are described by Simon Corcoran (*The Projet Volterra and the palingenesis of imperial constitutions: principles and problems*, pp. 139–160), one of its participants. The objective of the project in its first phase was *palingenesis* of imperial legislation in the period between 193 and 455 CE, while the second phase "concerned the afterlife of Roman law and legal texts from the fifth to eleventh centuries" (p. 140). The biggest problem with this project proved to be information infrastructure. Owing to the rapid progress of information technologies, in order to make material collected previously available to researchers, a large investment of work and funds is currently needed to adapt them to the software used today. One of *Projet Volterra*'s outcomes is the publication of a *palingenesia* of imperial constitutions from the Severan era. The most important findings contained in this publication are presented by its author, Jean-Pierre Coriat (*La palingénésie des constitutions des Sévères. Programme Edoardo Volterra de l'École française de Rome 'Palingénésie des constitutions impériales du Principat'*, pp. 161–170). The volume is concluded by Dario Mantovani's presentation of the Redhis project (*ERC-Project Redhis: A New Appreciation of Juristic Texts and Patterns of Thought in Late Antiquity* (pp. 171–192). This is another of the current crop of major projects concerning the history of Roman law. It is rather different from the others, as its full name reveals – "Rediscovering the Hidden

Structure” (= Redhis). The project aims to investigate the hypothesis according to which the ideas of Roman lawyers survived during the Late Empire. The research focuses especially on the period from Diocletian to Justinian (p. 171). This hypothesis is important because many historians of Roman law disagree. The hypothesis is to be tested on the basis of private law from the point of view of legal culture in the epoch in question and the potential presence in it of solutions proposed by earlier Roman lawyers. The tool to be used to verify it will be a corpus of passages from legal works preserved in Late Antique papyrus and parchments. Despite the short duration of the project (commenced in 2014, with a planned completion in 2020), the results gathered to date are extremely interesting (cf. pp. 181–191).

The results of studies on the history of Roman law – or at least a large proportion of them – in general are seldom reflected in the works of historians. In the case of *senatus consulta* and edicts, the situation is rather different, since they concern those aspects and periods of Rome’s past in which the legal decisions of the senate and emperors had a decisive impact on the shape and course of all kinds of public affairs. Familiarity with them is therefore indispensable for researchers of the history of Rome. Both the books discussed here make it clear how important it is in this respect to complete Volterra’s work, and how much historians already owe to other projects involving *palingenesia* of Roman legislation. We can also only hope that researchers will not need to wait so long for the next publications stemming from the PaRoS project.

Edward Dąbrowa (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)